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United States Department of Agriculture

ALLEGHENY FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION*

Technical Note No. 40 — Philadelphia, Pa.
Forest Service — June 1, 1943

SUMMER SEASONED FUELWOOD BEST

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Your winter's supply of fuelwood should be purchased now if you are to be sure of dry wood next fall. Lack of woods labor has made this fuel scarce and the little on the market is usually freshly cut and green. If you can buy or cut it now, it should be fairly well seasoned by the middle of October, but if green wood is piled outdoors as late as August it may be only half seasoned by November and will remain in that condition until March. If the wood is well seasoned by November, it will pick up a little moisture during the winter if left outdoors, but not enough to spoil its burning qualities if properly stacked. However, if it is not dry by November, don't expect it to get any drier during the winter. Move it into a dry barn or a dry, warm basement.

Producers of fuelwood should note that a cord of hardwood may lose from 800 to 1500 pounds in seasoning, and reabsorption of moisture during winter may mean as much as 300 pounds per cord extra weight to haul. In these days of labor shortage and equipment troubles this is important.

These results are based upon recent tests extending over a period of 12 months involving both round and split sticks of red maple, birch, white oak, and red oak having an average stick diameter of 4.4 inches. Original and final moisture contents were determined by means of wafer samples taken from the sticks. Intermediate monthly weights of each stick were recorded and these converted to per cord weights as shown by the chart on the back of this sheet. The initial weight of approximately 4700 pounds per cord (representing about 68% moisture content) is indicated by the green-weight line near the top. Broken lines indicate estimated weights for wood cut in June and July. The zone of good seasoning, as shown on the lower right margin, covers weights of about 3400 to 3660 pounds per cord for the species tested, and represents approximately 20% to 30% moisture content.

As the moisture content of green wood varies somewhat with species, the period required to attain 20% to 30% moisture content will also vary. Trends shown in the chart are probably accurate for most hardwoods, but the results given can only be claimed for the species named and for seasoning in a climatic region similar to that of Northeastern Connecticut.

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* In cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

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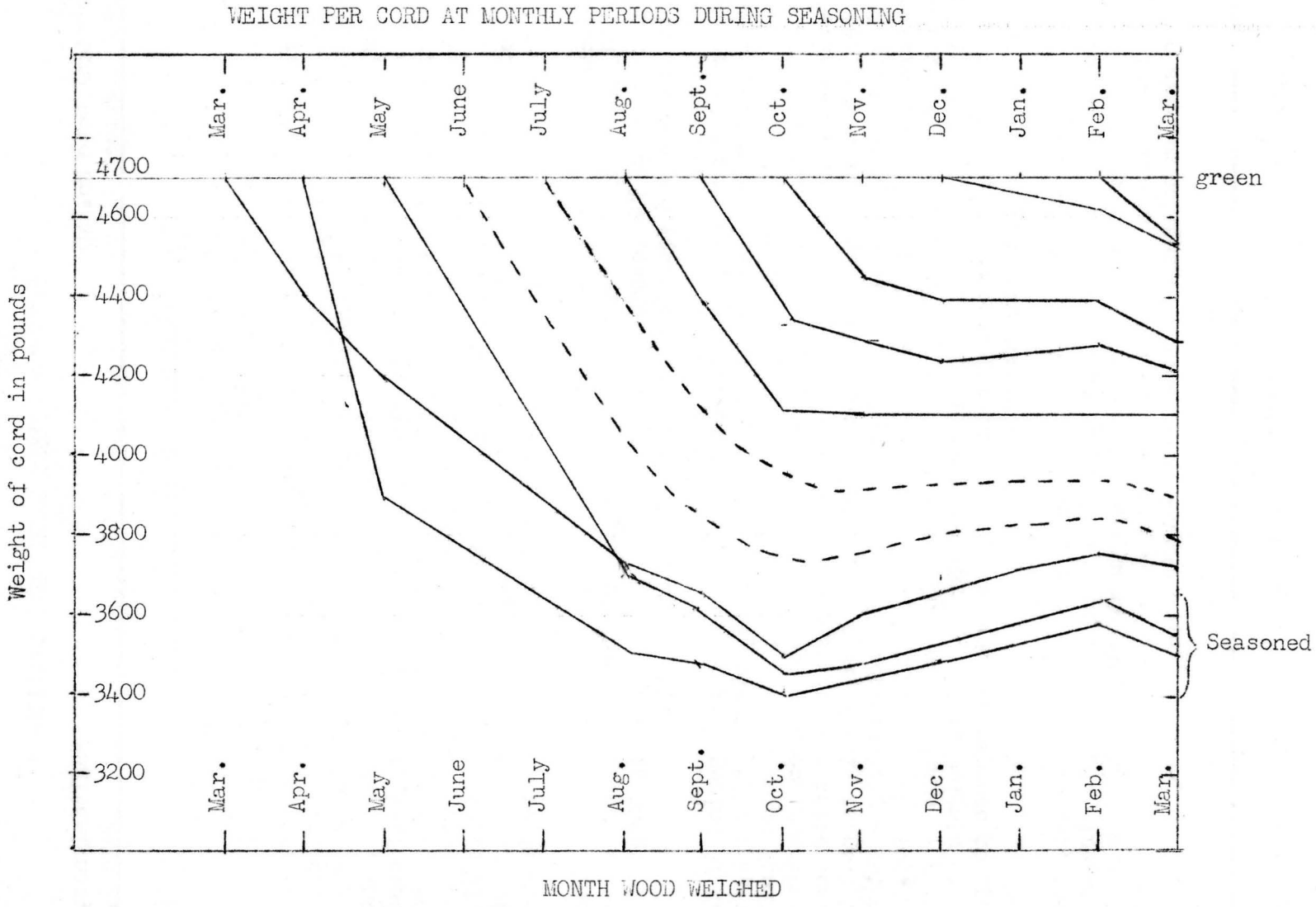
EXPERIMENT STATION


WEIGHT PER CORD AT MONTHLY PERIODS DURING SEASONING
Weight of cord in pounds
4700
4600
4400
4200
4000
3800
3600
3400
3200
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
July
Aug.
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
green
Seasoned
MONTH WOOD WEIGHED